



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

White Mountain National Forest  
Ammonoosuc-Pemigewasset  
Ranger District

1171 NH Route 175  
Holderness, NH 03245  
Comm: (603) 536-1315  
TTY: (603) 536-3281

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File Code: 1950

Date: January 12, 2005

Dear Planning Participant:

The White Mountain National Forest is beginning the environmental analysis process for the proposed Ellsworth Project that includes: vegetation management, maintenance of existing wildlife openings, and maintenance of the existing road system in the Project Area.

Enclosed for your comment is the following information for this project:

- The project proposal, location and description;
- The reasons for making the proposal at this time;
- What decisions will be made; and
- How you can help with the decision-making process.

The Project Area consists of approximately 4,100 acres located in the towns of Campton, Ellsworth, and Rumney, Grafton County, New Hampshire. Information about this proposal is also available on our website at: <http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/white/projects/index.html>.

You have received this mailing because of your past interest in this type of project on the White Mountain National Forest. You may also have received it because you own property near the Project Area. I am interested in hearing your comments about our proposal, including any information you have about the Project Area that could help us improve our plans.

Your comments may be provided orally or in writing<sup>i</sup> (phone, letter, FAX, or e-mail) and must be received by February 15, 2005. Indicate in your response that your comments are in reference to the proposed Ellsworth Project. Comments should be addressed to John Serfass, District Ranger in one of the following ways:

**By Mail** – Ammonoosuc-Pemigewasset Ranger Station, 1171 NH Route 175, Holderness, NH 03245, ATTN: Ellsworth Project/Janice Mulherin;

**By FAX** – (603) 536-5147, ATTN: Ellsworth Project/Janice Mulherin

**By phone** – (603) 536-1315 (voice) or 603- 536-3281 (TTY), ask for Janice Mulherin

**By email** – [jmulherin@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmulherin@fs.fed.us)

Please include the following information with your comments:

- Your name, address (include in any email correspondence), and, if possible, telephone number; and
- Site-specific facts or comments concerning the proposed Ellsworth Project, along with supporting information that you believe I should consider in reaching a decision.

Your views on this project are important to me. If you need more information on this project, please contact Janice Mulherin at (603) 536-1315.

The results of our analysis of the Ellsworth Project will be documented in an Environmental Assessment (EA), and a decision is expected during the spring of 2005. Before a decision is made on this project, you will be given an opportunity to comment (30-Day Comment Period) on that analysis. If you provide comments pertinent to the Ellsworth Project during the 30-Day Comment Period, you will also be eligible to file an administrative appeal of the Ellsworth Project Decision. You will not be eligible to appeal the decision if you only respond to the Scoping Notice you are now reading.

If you provide comments to the Scoping information now, you will receive the 30-Day Comment Report. If you do not wish to provide comments at this time, but wish to receive the 30-Day Comment Report, please let us know. Anyone who responds to the Scoping information or the forth coming 30 Day Comment Period, will receive a copy of the Decision Notice when it has been signed.

Thank you for your interest in helping us manage the White Mountain National Forest.

Sincerely,

/S/ **JOHN J. SERFASS**

JOHN J. SERFASS  
District Ranger

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<sup>1</sup> Comments received in response to this solicitation, including the names and addresses of those who comment, will be considered part of the public record and will be available for public inspection. Comments submitted anonymously will be accepted and considered. Additionally, pursuant to 7CFR1.27(d), any person may request that a submission be withheld from the public record by showing how the Freedom of Information Act permits such confidentiality. Persons requesting such confidentiality should be aware that confidentiality is granted in only very limited circumstances. The Forest Service will inform the requester of its decision regarding a request for confidentiality. Where the request is denied, the submission will be returned, and the requester notified that the comments may be resubmitted with or without name and address.



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

Forest  
Service

January 2005



# ELLSWORTH PROJECT

**Towns of Campton, Ellsworth, and Rumney**  
Grafton County, New Hampshire

## SCOPING REPORT

**Prepared By**  
**Ammonoosuc-Pemigewasset Ranger District**  
White Mountain National Forest

For Information Contact: Janice Mulherin  
Ammonoosuc-Pemigewasset-Pemigewasset Ranger District  
White Mountain National Forest  
1171 NH Route 175  
Holderness, NH 03245  
603-536-1315

[www.fs.fed.us/r9/white](http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/white)

**This document is available in large print.**

**Contact the White Mountain National Forest Supervisor's Office**

**1-603-528-8721**

**TTY 1-603-528-8722**

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## **Where in the Forest Service NEPA Process is the Ellsworth Project?**

NEPA is the Forest Service decision-making process. An acronym for the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, NEPA provides opportunities for interested parties to give their ideas and opinions about resource management. This input is important in helping us identify resource needs, which will shape the alternatives evaluated and lead to the formation of a decision.

This form shows the steps of the NEPA process, and where the Ellsworth Project is in that process.

### **Step One - Need for a Project**

The Forest Service or some other entity may identify the need for a project.

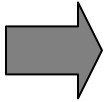
**YOU** may bring the need for a project to the attention of the Forest Service.

### **Step Two - Develop Project Proposal**

The Forest Service or a project proponent develops detailed, site-specific proposal

**YOU** may be proponent who develops proposal or **YOU** can share input and ideas

### **Step Three - Scoping (Public Input)**



The Forest Service solicits public input on the site-specific proposal to define the scope of environmental analysis and range of alternatives to be considered

**YOU** provide site-specific input: suggest issues, alternatives, mitigation measures

### **Step Four - Develop Reasonable Range of Alternatives**

If proposal fits categorical exclusion: Forest Service makes & documents decision

If scoping determines need for EA or EIS: Forest Service develops alternatives

**YOU** suggest alternatives to the proposed action during the scoping process

### **Step Five – 30-Day Formal Public Comment Period (Sugarhouse Project 30-Day Comment Information)**

Forest Service performs analysis of environmental effects, identifies preferred alternative, solicits formal public comment (30-Day Comment Period)

**YOU** provide timely & substantive comments on the analysis during Comment

Period

### **Step Six – Environmental Analysis & Decision**

Forest Service finalizes the Environmental Assessment and makes decision to implement one of the alternatives

**YOU** can review decision; you can appeal if you disagree and you have

“standing”. *Standing: You provided substantive comments during formal period (Step 5).*

### **Step Seven - Appeal**

Forest Service allows public 45 days following legal notice of decision to appeal

**YOU** may file formal Notice of Appeal

### **Step Eight - Implementation**

Forest Service implements the project

**YOU** may contribute labor, equipment or funding to implement the project

### **Step Nine - Monitor and Evaluate**

Forest Service monitors and evaluates project results

**YOU** provide feedback on the project to the Forest Service

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## **INSERTS**

**Ellsworth Project Map**  
**Planning Participant Letter**

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## What is the Forest Service Proposing?

The Ammonoosuc-Pemigewasset Ranger District of the White Mountain National Forest is proposing the following activities within the Ellsworth Project Area:

- Vegetation Management;
- Maintenance of the existing road system; and
- Maintenance of existing wildlife openings.

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## Where is the proposed Ellsworth Project located?

The Ellsworth Project is located in the towns of Campton, Rumney and Ellsworth, Grafton County, New Hampshire, on the Ammonoosuc-Pemigewasset Ranger District. The Project Area of approximately 4,100 acres is all located on National Forest system lands. The Project Area is located in four watersheds: the West Branch of the Pemigewasset, Bog Brook of the Pemigewasset, Stinson Brook, and the Lower Baker River. The federal lands within the Project Area include Management Area (MA) 2.1 and 3.1 lands within Compartments 33, 38 and 154. In addition, the Project Area is part of the larger Habitat Management Unit (HMU) 408 (approximately 6,000 acres).

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## Background

### Why is the Forest Service considering activities in the Ellsworth Project Area at this time?

When forested areas are managed to produce wildlife habitats and wood products, growth in the size and density of trees is important. Over time, forest management stands that have been previously clearcut have become restocked with tree seedlings. When these stands reach sapling size, they no longer provide early-successional habitat. In stands that were partially cut to reduce stocking levels (area occupied by trees), tree growth has increased stocking levels to the point where competition for light, moisture, and soil resources results in reduced growth and stress for individual trees. Over time, stands age to the point where they are considered mature.

Areas like these are analyzed every 15 - 20 years to assess habitat diversity and the potential need for harvesting growth and regenerating stands to maintain a sustainable forest. The last vegetation management occurred in the Project Area between the mid 1980's and early 1990's. Surveys were conducted in 2003 to assess the current vegetation conditions in the Project Area.

Recent assessment of MA 2.1 and 3.1 lands in HMU 408 show that this HMU is weighted towards mature and over-mature forests and there is little regenerating habitat. Forest Plan direction for this area seeks to provide a balanced mix of habitats for all wildlife species and to increase wildlife habitat diversity for the full range of wildlife species with emphasis on early-successional species. Based on Forest Plan desired composition (pp. III- 13, VII B-4, & VII-B-5) there is a need for increased regenerating forest age class. Opportunities exist, through timber

harvesting, reforestation treatments, and wildlife habitat maintenance strategies to improve the growth and vigor of forested stands and diversify stand age class. At this time these improvements can be accomplished by harvesting mature and poor quality trees and regenerating new trees (Forest Plan, pp. III-3, III-30, III-36), resulting in a variety of wildlife habitat types and conditions.

## **What is the proposed Project Area like?**

The Project Area is located on moderately sloped terrain, ranging from approximately 600 to 2,000 feet above sea level. The Project Area contains predominantly the northern hardwood, paper birch, and spruce-fir forest types. These forest types typically provides habitat for wildlife species common to the White Mountain National Forest. The annual growth of the trees and shrubs within portions of the Project Area typically provide browse or mast at various times of the year, including buds and flowers of woody plants such as aspen catkins and hobble bush in the spring, soft raspberry fruit in the summer, and hard beechnuts in the fall.

Most of the land in the Project Area was first managed for agriculture by early settlers. Timber harvesting under National Forest ownership began in the 1950s and has been conducted on the average of every 15 years in the Project Area. Sugar Maple trees in a portion of the Project Area have been tapped for sap production. A bird monitoring project has been ongoing since the mid 1980's.

Today the Project Area receives light amounts of recreational use by the visiting public. The various activities in the area experienced by the public are hiking, scenic and fall foliage viewing, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, snow-shoeing, wildlife watching, hunting, fishing, and various other recreational pursuits.

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## **Purpose & Need**

### **Why does the Forest Service need to implement the Ellsworth Project at this time?**

The purpose of this proposed project is to implement Forest Plan direction in the Ellsworth Project Area by addressing site-specific needs and opportunities to move the area from the existing condition towards the desired condition. This can be accomplished by implementing activities approved in the Forest Plan (vegetation management). An interdisciplinary team has identified site-specific needs for natural resource management that would change or enhance the present conditions and move the Project Area toward the desired condition described in the Forest Plan, as amended (pp. III-30 through III-41).

The proposed Ellsworth Project Area is located within MA 2.1 and 3.1 lands of compartments 33, 38, and 154 which comprise approximately 57 percent of HMU 408. This HMU also contains area that is not subject to vegetation management including MA 6.1 and 6.3.

Existing resource conditions in the Ellsworth Project Area were evaluated against the Forest Plan desired condition. Based on Forest Plan goals and objectives and the differences between existing conditions and desired conditions, several needs and opportunities for the Project Area have



been identified. The following list describes the “needs for change” identified for the Ellsworth Project Area that would meet the project’s purpose of implementing the Forest Plan. Protecting riparian values, maintaining and protecting habitat for proposed, threatened, endangered, and sensitive species, and maintaining healthy and resilient ecosystems into the future have been and will continue to be primary considerations in management of the Ellsworth Project Area.

1. At the landscape level, there is little diversity of age classes. Regeneration habitat (trees 0-9 years old) makes up 1% of Habitat Management Unit 408. There is a need to increase the amount of the 0-9 year old forest type to improve wildlife habitat diversity for species that use on early-successional habitat (Forest Plan, pp. III-13, VII-B-4 & VII-B-5). Opportunities exist, through commercial timber harvesting and reforestation treatments, to improve the growth, vigor, and health of forested stands. By harvesting mature or poor quality trees and regenerating new trees a variety of wildlife habitat types and conditions would be provided. Stands would be harvested in accordance with the appropriate silvicultural guidelines and Forest Plan direction. Activities could include group cutting, single-tree harvesting, and clearcutting.
2. Production of forest products in the plan is based on harvesting growth on a sustained yield basis. The Ellsworth Project Area received treatments in the 1980s and early 1990s to promote new growth. Fully stocked and mature stands in the Project Area need to be treated to harvest past growth and restore the conditions that encourage new growth of trees.
3. Congress annually funds the Forest Service to provide commercial timber within the capability of the lands and individual Forest Plans. The White Mountain National Forest Plan allocates land for sustainable wood production (MAs 2.1 and 3.1). People’s demand for wood products continues to be high, which supports the need to supply this renewable resource. Projects such as this, which supply wood products, provide a means to satisfy people’s demand for wood and contribute to the economic viability of local communities (Forest Plan, III-3 and III-30).
4. In both the short- and long-term, an adequate transportation system to access the Project Area is needed for management of National Forest Lands and to provide motorized recreation opportunities (Forest Plan, III-31, III-34).

---

## Proposed Action

### What activities is the Forest Service proposing to meet the needs identified above?

The Forest Service is proposing the following activities to move the Ellsworth Project Area towards the Forest Plan desired condition (see Ellsworth Project Map Insert). As the project is fully developed and analyzed, actual amounts of activities accomplished on the ground (measured in acres, miles, feet, millions of board feet of timber (MMBF),

user days, number of facilities, and signs) may vary slightly. **Table 1** displays the actions proposed to meet the needs for change identified in the Ellsworth Project Area.

**Table 1: Activities Proposed for the Ellsworth Project Area**

Activity	Stand Acres	Treatment/ Amount
<b>VEGETATION MANAGEMENT:</b>		
<b>Even-Aged Management</b>		
Clearcutting (Northern Hardwood, paper birch)	108	90
Shelterwood/Preparatory Cut	62	62
Shelterwood/Overstory Removal (softwoods)	34	34
Timber Stand Improvement	61	61
<b>Uneven-Aged Management</b>		
Group Selection (groups range in size from 1/10 to 2 acres in size; ½ acre average) *	321	77
Single Tree Selection	11	11
Single Tree and Group selection combined	245	245
<b>Total Even and Uneven-Aged Acres</b>	<b>842</b>	<b>580</b>
<b>ESTIMATED HARVEST VOLUME</b>		<b>3.9 MMBF**</b>
<b>TRANSPORTATION</b>		
Road Maintenance (Forest Roads FR 605, FR 415, FR 431)		<b>3.0 Miles</b>
Maintenance of Existing Wildlife Openings		<b>2 Acres</b>

\* Groups harvested represent approximately 20% of stand acres

\*\* Million Board Feet

**Mitigation Measures** In addition to the generally applicable Forest and Management area-wide Standards and Guidelines (Forest Plan Section III & VII-B) and the State of New Hampshire's *Best Management Practices*, the following specific mitigation or coordination measures would be used in implementing the proposed action or alternatives:

1. Minimize the number of skid trail crossings for all existing designated snowmobile trails to minimize the impact to the trails and users;
2. Seasonal restrictions to reduce potential soil or recreation impacts;
3. Signs will be used to regulate snowmobile and logging traffic to ensure safety;
4. Retain mast producing beech trees heavily used by black bear unless the trees pose a safety hazard or located in regeneration units;
5. Indigenous minority tree species or beech trees genetically resistant to scale complex would be encouraged in uneven-aged treatments by cutting trees around them that compete for space and resources. In even-aged regeneration treatments, these species would be protected and buffered with a group of other leave trees; and
6. Maintain a high degree of sensitivity toward the visual appearance of the Project Area as seen from Rt. 93, Bog Road in Campton and Tenney Mountain Highway in Plymouth.

**Table 2** displays the proposed treatment by forest type, approximate treatment acres and season of harvest.

Table 2: Proposed Stands Treatments for the Ellsworth Project					
STAND	STAND ACRES	FOREST TYPE	APPROXIMATE TREATMENT ACRES	PROPOSED TREATMENT	SEASON OF HARVEST
<b>COMPARTMENT 33</b>					
3	6	Northern Hardwood	6	Timber Stand Improvement	N/A
11	166	Northern Hardwood	166	Single Tree & Grp Selection	Winter
13	12	Paper Birch/Softwd	2	Group Selection	Winter
20	20	Northern Hardwood	4	Group Selection	Winter
32	4	Northern Hardwood	4	Timber Stand Improvement	N/A
40	9	Northern Hardwood	9	Clearcut	Winter
46	30	Northern Hardwood	8	Group Selection	Winter
48	5	Northern Hardwood	5	Clearcut	Winter
49	3	Northern Hardwood	3	Clearcut	Winter
50	30	Paper Birch/Aspen	8	Group Selection	Winter
51	37	Softwood	37	Shelterwd-Prep Cut	S, F, W**
52	16	Paper Birch	16	Shelterwd Removal	Winter
53	3	Northern Hardwood	3	Clearcut	Winter
54	7	Paper Birch/Aspen	7	Clearcut	Winter
55	6	Paper Birch/Aspen	6	Clearcut	Winter
<b>COMPARTMENT 38</b>					
1	50	Mixed Wood	50	Single & Grp Selection/TSI *	Winter
2	16	White Pine/Oak	16	Timber Stand Improvement	N/A
3	17	Northern Hardwood	17	Timber Stand Improvement	N/A
5	77	Northern Hardwood	19	Group Selection	Winter
12 & 14	67	Northern Hardwood	17	Group Selection	Winter
7	12	Northern Hardwood	12	Timber Stand Improvement	N/A
20	8	Northern Hardwood	8	Single Tree Selection	Winter
21	38	Northern Hardwood	20	Clearcut	Winter
<b>COMPARTMENT 154</b>					
5	17	Paper Birch/Softwd	4	Group Selection	S, F, W**
11	17	Northern Hardwood	17	Clearcut	Winter
12	6	Northern Hardwood	6	Clearcut	Winter
17	29	Northern Hardwood	29	Single Tree & Grp Selection	Winter
18	17	Northern Hardwood	4	Group Selection	Winter
19	18	Northern Hardwood	4	Group Selection	Winter
20	18	Northern Hardwood	18	Shelterwd/Ovrstory Remval	Winter
21	7	Paper Birch	7	Clearcut	Winter
22	33	Paper Birch/Softwd	7	Group Selection	S, F, W**
23	7	Paper Birch	7	Clearcut	Winter
29	25	Softwood	25	Shelterwd-Prep Cut	S, F, W**
37	6	Northern Hardwood	6	Timber Stand Improvement	N/A
48	3	Northern Hardwood	3	Single Tree Selection	Winter
<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>842 Acres</b>		<b>580 Acres</b>	<b>3.9 MMBF</b>	

- \* TSI – Timber Stand Improvement
- \*\* Summer, Fall, or Winter

## What decisions will be made?

An environmental analysis will evaluate the site-specific issues, consider alternatives, and analyze effects of the proposed action and alternatives. Based on the needs identified for the Ellsworth Project, the scope of the project is limited to decisions concerning activities within the Ellsworth Project Area. An Environmental Assessment will provide the deciding official (John Serfass, District Ranger) with the information he needs to make the following decisions with regard to the Ellsworth Project:

1. Which actions, if any, will be approved (which alternative to implement) that will move the Ellsworth Project Area towards the desired condition per Forest Plan direction and address the needs and issues identified for this Project?
2. Is the information in this analysis sufficient to implement the proposed activities?
3. Does the proposed project have a significant impact that would trigger a need to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement?
4. What mitigation measures and monitoring requirements should the Forest Service apply to these activities to meet Forest Plan standards and guidelines for all resources?
5. Will a Forest Plan amendment be required to accommodate this project?

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## How is the public involved in this decision?

At this time the Forest Service is inviting you to make site-specific comments on our plans for the Ellsworth Project. We suggest you consider the following questions when looking at the activities proposed for the Ellsworth Project:

1. Does the proposed action move the Project Area towards the desired condition envisioned in the Forest Plan while protecting the environment?
2. Is there anything about this area that the Forest Service may not know which might affect activities proposed for the Project Area?

Your comments will be used to define significant (unresolved) issues associated with this project, to develop alternatives to the Proposed Action, and to refine the analysis of effects.

The results of our analysis for the Ellsworth Project will be documented in an Environmental Assessment (EA), and a decision is expected during the spring of 2005. Before a decision is made on this project, you will be given an opportunity to comment (30-Day Comment Period) on that analysis. If you provide comments pertinent to the Ellsworth Project during the 30-Day Comment Period, you will also be eligible to file an administrative appeal of the Ellsworth Project Decision. You will not be eligible to appeal the decision if you only respond to the Scoping Notice you are now reading.

If you provide comments to the Ellsworth Scoping Report now, you will receive the 30-Day Comment Report. If you do not wish to provide

comments at this time, but wish to receive the 30-Day Comment Report, please let us know. Anyone who responds to the Ellsworth Scoping Report will receive a copy of the Decision Notice when it has been signed.

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## How can you comment?

### Written comments

Written comments must be submitted to John Serfass, District Ranger, White Mountain National Forest, at the following address:

Ammonoosuc-Pemigewasset Ranger Station  
1171 NH Route 175  
Holderness, NH 03245  
ATTN: Ellsworth Project/Janice Mulherin

EMAIL: Electronic comments must be submitted in a format such as an email message, plain text (.txt), rich text format (.rtf), Word (.doc), or any software supported by Microsoft applications to: [jmulherin@fs.fed.us](mailto:jmulherin@fs.fed.us).

FAX: (603) 536-5147, ATTN: Ellsworth Project / Janice Mulherin.

### Oral comments

Oral comments must be provided at the Responsible Official's office during normal business hours (08:00 am - 4:30 pm) via telephone (603) - 536-1315 (TTY 603-536-3281) or in person at the above address: ask for Janice Mulherin.

### Information to include when submitting comments

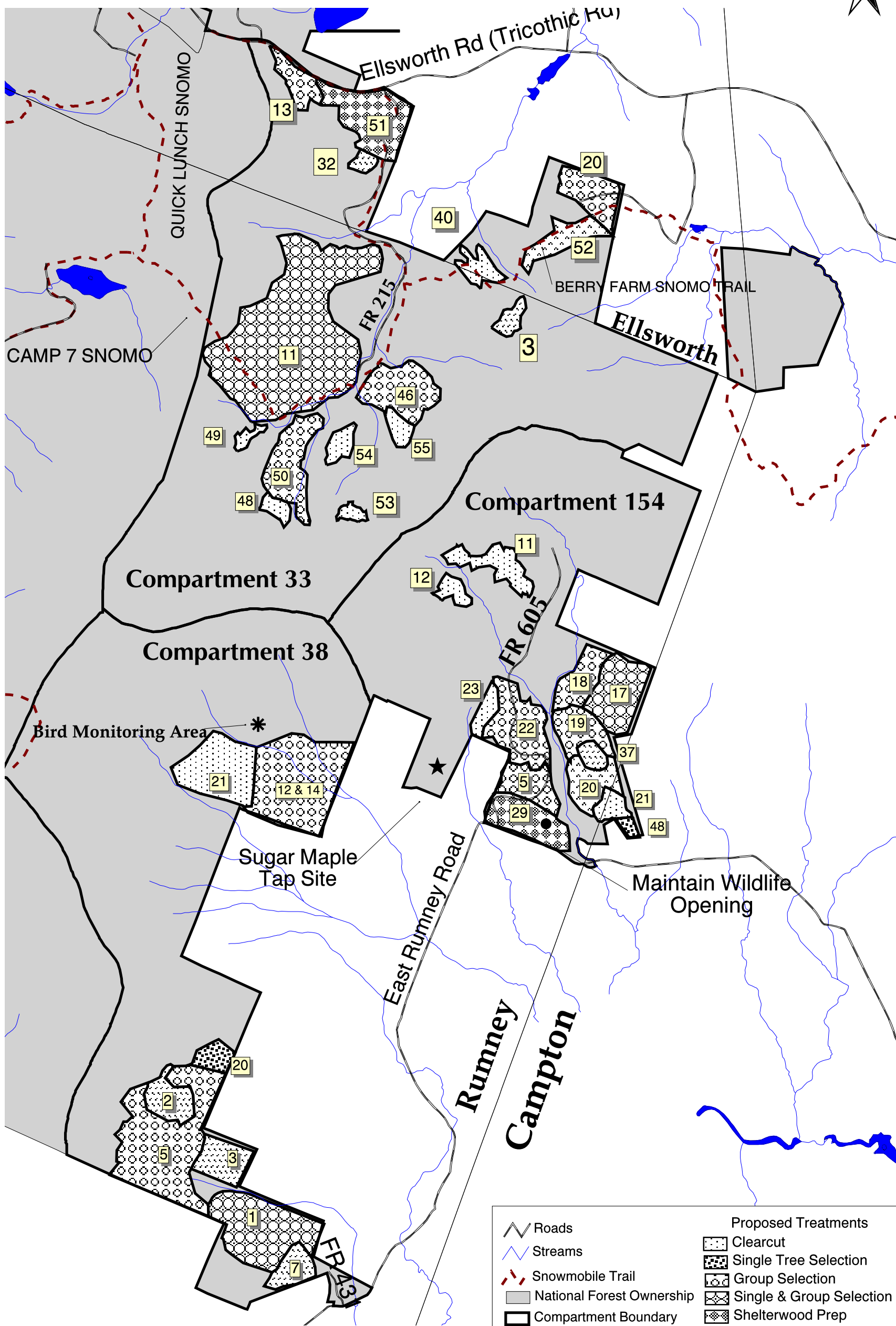
1. Name and address (include in email and FAX comments also);
2. Title of the proposed project; and
3. Site-specific comments on the Proposed Action along with supporting reasons that the Responsible Official should consider reaching a decision.

**Ammonoosuc-Pemigewasset Ranger District**  
**White Mountain National Forest**  
**1171 NH Route 175**  
**Holderness, NH 03245**

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# Ellsworth Project



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